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Wing welcomes new commander

By
Tyler Hemstreet
Staff writer

The 62nd Airlift Wing welcomed its new commander in a change-of-command ceremony Wednesday in Hangar 4.

Col. Jeffrey Stephenson took command of the wing as Col. Jerry Martinez heads off to be the executive officer for Gen. Arthur Lichte, commander of Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

The ceremony's presiding officer, Maj. Gen. James Hawkins, 18th Air Force commander, recognized the wing for its recent outstanding accomplishments before handing over command to Colonel Stephenson.

The 62nd AW airlifted nearly 150,000 tons of cargo, successfully flew 57 Operation Deep Freeze missions, executed a historic airdrop at the South Pole and hosted one of the "largest and best" Rodeo competitions ever in June under Colonel Martinez's leadership, the general said.

"We thank you for the way you have led these Airmen," General Hawkins said to Colonel Martinez, who was also awarded a Legion of Merit at the ceremony.

After his remarks, General Hawkins accepted the command flag from Colonel Martinez and passed it to Colonel

Stephenson to complete the official change of command.

Colonel Stephenson comes to McChord from the 15th Airlift Wing at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, where he served as the vice wing commander, and said he is excited about upholding the high standard of the 62nd AW.

"I look forward to meeting each and every one of you," Colonel Stephenson said to the many Airmen seated in the bleachers and standing at attention in the rear of the hangar, "because [the wing] is a partnership."

He added that he is excited about tackling any challenges the wing will face in the future.

Colonel Stephenson has led at several levels. He served as the commander of the 55th Air Refueling Squadron and deputy commander of the 97th Operations Group at Altus AFB, Okla., as well as commander of the 22nd Operations Group at McConnell AFB, Kan. He has three master's degrees and has attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.

Colonel Stephenson was also awarded an Airman's Medal in 2000 for pulling a pilot from a burning airplane after it crashed following initial takeoff.

"This is a man with a lot of courage," General Hawkins said.



Maj. Gen. James Hawkins, left, 18th Air Force commander, presents Col. Jeffrey Stephenson the 62nd Airlift Wing flag at the change-of-command ceremony Wednesday at Hangar 4.

Military absentee voting 'primary' concern for officials

By
John Kruzal
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — For Federal Voting Assistance Program officials, getting deployed troops and their families engaged in the current election season is a primary goal.

Ahead of the November general election, officials with the FVAP, which fosters voting participation by uniformed and U.S. citizens abroad, are assisting eligible absentee voters who wish to cast ballots in their states' primary election.

"It's important that voters participate in the upcoming primary elections," said Polli Brunelli, the program's chief. "We have over 20 primaries occurring in February, so now is the time, if you've received your ballot, to vote and get it back by the state deadlines."

Ms. Brunelli said registering to vote is a simple process.

"Absentee voters fill out a federal postcard application form to request a ballot, and send it into their local election official where the voter is legally authorized to vote," she said.

The ballot will be sent to the voter, who then votes on the ballot and sends it back to the local election office.

Paper copies of the application form are available at military installations, embassies and consulates and from organizations of overseas citizens. Electronic forms are posted online at the Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site.

Citizens using this form should vote and submit it immediately using regular mail or, where allowed by state law, by fax or e-mail, to their local election officials. The FVAP's Integrated Voting Alternative Site shows citizens if fax or e-mail alternatives are permitted in their home state.

From the Voting Assistance page on the McChord intranet site to the Unit

Voting Assistance Counselors assigned to each unit, there are a multitude of tools and resources on hand to help Airmen cast their ballots in the upcoming national election.

Through various links on the intranet page and personalized information from the UVACs, Airmen can obtain various voting information, register online and get help navigating the voting process and deadlines for whatever state they are registered in, said Capt. William Parker, the installation voting assistance officer.

"Whether young Airmen are away from home and it's their first opportunity to vote or someone is looking to file an absentee ballot for the first time, all the unit reps are making themselves available to help answer any questions Airmen have," Captain Parker said.

There are listings of UVACs on the site at <https://62aw.mcchord.af.mil/VotingAssistance/default.aspx> and through the base voting action line at 982-VOTE.

Members of the U.S. armed forces traditionally represent an active component of overall voting-age Americans. The total voting participation rate among servicemembers was 79 percent in 2004, compared to the 64 percent rate of the general public, according to figures published by FVAP officials.


In a memorandum to military secretaries and top commanders sent Nov. 26, 2007, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates underscored the importance of extending voting rights to servicemembers at home and abroad.

"Voting is a both a right and a responsibility of citizens in our country," Secretary Gates continued. "(Leaders of the armed services must) do everything we can to encourage participation and ensure that our servicemembers and families are able to exercise their right to vote and have that vote counted."

(62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs contributed to this article.)


Weekend Weather

FRIDAY




Hi: 42
Low: 28

SATURDAY



Hi: 39
Low: 31

SUNDAY



Hi: 38
Low: 31

Forecast generated at 7 a.m. Thursday
Courtesy of the 62nd Operations Support Squadron

Mission accomplished

Total McChord sorties697
Total flying hours2,445
Cargo moved (tons)6,147.3
Departure reliability rate95.8%
Mission capable rate86.9%
Personnel currently deployed467
Reservists currently activated.....174
(Jan. 1 to Wednesday. Numbers updated Wednesday.)

Don't miss it ...

Crock Pot Chili Cook-Off

A crock pot chili cook-off will be held Wed. at the Emerald Room of the McChord Clubs and Community Center from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

McChord welcomes Col. Jeffrey Stephenson

This week Colonel Stephenson is out and about meeting Airmen and familiarizing himself with the base and his new surroundings. His first commentary will run next week.

Col. Jeffrey Stephenson, 62nd Airlift Wing commander, greets Airmen Wednesday at the McChord Clubs and Community Center.



Photo by Abner Guzman

Locate your goal posts, formulate a plan to succeed

By

Lt. Col. Bruce Roehm

62nd Medical Support Squadron commander

The Super Bowl is here with the New England Patriots versus the New York Giants. The Patriots' unbeaten 18-0 record is on the line and as well as a moment in sports history. I bet they know where their goal posts are come Feb. 3. In life, as in football, you won't go far unless you know where your goal posts are both personally and professionally.

At work, often you may wonder how your job makes a difference in supporting the Nation's Guardians — America's 21st Century Air Force — in promoting and defending the national interests by flying, fighting and winning. Better yet, how you enable the 62nd Airlift Wing combat airlift missions. From Air Force doctrine, Air Force Instructions and Airman Roll Calls to inspections, commander's calls, supervisor feedback and mentor discussions, there is an abundance of guidance and direction to help facilitate your understanding of what Air Force, unit and personal goals are and should be. It also helps you frame what is expected of you and how your job is an important part of the bigger mission — ensuring we are the best Air Force in the world.

OK ... so not everyone even knows where to find Air Force doctrine, but the other references are easily at your disposal. One way to help you set goals is to seek feedback from your supervisors, peers and mentors, as their experience is priceless. Another way is to ensure not only your programs and training are in top-notch, inspection-ready order, but also those whom you supervise and even those who need a little extra encouragement and support. You will be able to easily see what areas need improvement and areas where your creativity and energy can help improve the way we do business.

So where are your goal posts? Your commitment, faith in oneself, desire for excellence and ability to be a part of something bigger than yourself are all key factors. Are you taking classes toward your Community College of the Air Force or bachelor's or master's degree? Are you planning to get married and start a family? Are you saving for a new car, new home, dream vacation or retirement? What is your vision of where you see yourself in one year, five years and 20 years? Do you know what it takes to make chief master sergeant? Do you understand the benefits of the Montgomery GI Bill and tuition assistance?

Team McChord has proven its ability to charge for the goal posts and walk away with victory as in the recent "Outstanding" Logistics Standardization Evaluation Program and "Excellent" Unit Compliance Inspection grades. Whether this was your first inspection or your tenth, whether you were able to launch the C-17 on time or successfully closeout the wing budget, or whether you are the Patriots' Tom Brady, the Giants' Eli Manning, new 62nd AW Commander Colonel Stephenson, or Airman Garritson (the most junior Airman at the 60th Anniversary Air Force Ball), they all know they are individually and as a member of a team, key to success. So keep your goal posts in sight and press on. You may be much closer to fulfilling them than you realize.

Professionals of the week

62nd Medical Support Squadron

Staff Sgt. Amapola Espiritu

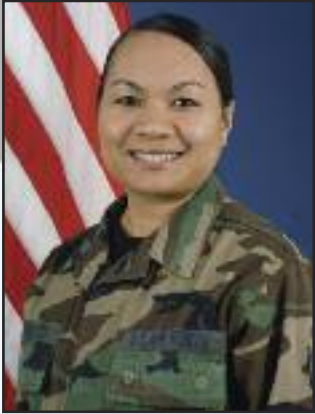
Duty title:
Laboratory technician

Duty section:
Clinical laboratory

Hometown:
Torrance, Calif.

Why she's super:

Sergeant Espiritu is a take-charge kind of person. She has stepped up and filled in on several occasions in the absence of the laboratory non commissioned officer in charge. As team leader, she managed and ensured 24-hour lab coverage of 56 mobility lines, drawing 1,750 blood samples. She aced ten College of American Pathologists proficiency surveys with 582 line items tested with a 99 percent pass rate, which is vital to Laboratory National accreditation. She obtained her National Medical Technologist Certification through the American Society of Clinical Pathology and co-authored an article in the American Medical Technology magazine on a rare inherited disorder of copper metabolism. She was selected for the First Sergeants Excellence in Leadership Award and as 62nd MDSS NCO of the quarter for the 2nd quarter.



Staff Sgt. Tanya Williams

Duty title:
Assistant resource advisor

Duty section:
Resource management flight

Hometown:
Chacon, N.M.

Why she's tops:

Sergeant Williams is a true model of excellence. Having been hand-picked by the flight commander as a future budget analyst, she assisted in maintaining a \$9.2 million account. As the Medical Affirmative Claims officer, she promoted cross-functional teamwork with 62nd Airlift Wing legal office personnel during new staff transitions. Sergeant Williams' compassion and dedication for patients distinguishes her from her peers. Her polished ingenuity in the Patient Travel Program allows her to handle cases, enabling patients to receive critical last-minute medical care. As the assistant data quality manager, she collated and reported group information to Air Mobility Command headquarters with a 100 percent accuracy rate.



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62ND AIRLIFT WING, MCCORD AFB, WASHINGTON

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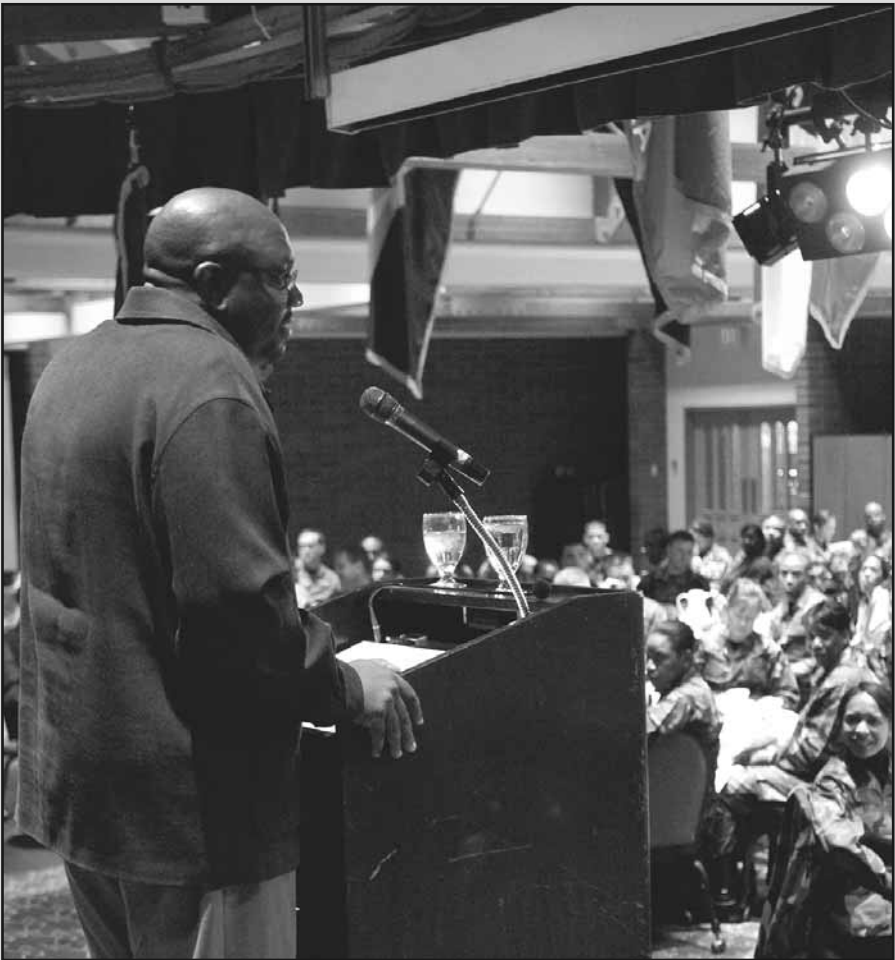
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Editorial content is edited, prepared, and provided by 62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

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Photo by Abner Guzman



McChord celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Guest speaker Jay Thomas, a community leader in the nonprofit sector for more than 12 years and former executive director of the Federal Way YMCA, speaks to Airmen during the MLK, Jr. luncheon held at the Northwest Connection on Jan. 18.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Eric Burks



Tops in Blue dazzles McChord

Tops in Blue members give a rousing performance during their show at McChord on Saturday evening. The current tour, "The Fly-By", is a musical tribute to 60 years of proud Air Force History, according to their official Web site.

Photo by Abner Guzman



Stepping up

Staff Sgt. Zed Nelson, 62nd Airlift Wing, is promoted to technical sergeant by Command Chief Master Sgt. Russell Kuck, left, and Col. Jerry Martinez, former 62nd AW commander, during his Stripes for Exceptional Performers ceremony recently.



New career program aids spouses

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Departments of Defense and Labor recently announced plans to jointly provide military spouses with opportunities to pursue portable careers in high-demand, high-growth occupations. This three-year Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative, offered at McChord and 17 other sites in eight states with large military populations, will enable military spouses to develop the skills needed to successfully start, navigate and advance their careers.

“America’s military spouses quietly and courageously bear the sacrifices required of them and their families as their loved ones are serving our country,” said Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao. “The Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative provides financial resources to help spouses develop their career goals and dreams.”

Military spouses suffer an unemployment rate that is three times that of their civilian counterparts, while nearly 77 percent of them report that they want or need to work. The frequent moves required by the military often make it difficult or even cost-prohibitive for spouses to establish long-term careers or meet state credentialing and licensing requirements. Almost three-fourths of military spouses say the cost of continuing their education is more than they can afford.

The Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative was created to help spouses overcome some of these financial barriers. The funding will make it possible for eligible candidates to receive Career Advancement Accounts in the amount of \$3,000 for one year, and renewable a second year for an additional \$3,000. This money can be used to pay for expenses directly related to postsecondary education and training, including tuition, books, necessary equipment, and credentialing and licensing fees in nationally identified high-growth, portable career fields such as education, health care, information technology, construction trades and financial services.

“It’s a great program and we’re excited about being able to offer it to spouses here,” said Maria Endris, an education counselor with the 62nd Mission Support Squadron.

The program has the ability to provide valuable job training for spouses, which can help them get jobs when the Air Force moves their family to the next location, Ms. Endris said.

Eligible program participants are military spouses with sponsors in pay grades E1-E5 and O1-O3 who have completed some college, or who have obtained a high school diploma or GED. Funds will be provided directly to educational institutions

and/or credentialing agencies. The two departments are jointly approving \$35.2 million over three years.

The Airman and Family Readiness Center here is offering monthly briefings on the new program starting Monday and Wednesday. The briefings run from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. and a representative from the U.S. Department of Labor will be on hand to talk about the program and answer any questions people have.

While applicants must meet the eligibility criteria to qualify for the career program, even if they don’t qualify they should still come to a briefing, said community readiness consultant Marvin Tamoro, 62nd MSS.

“There are other programs available to them that can help them get funding for education, and we can help them find something,” Mr. Tamoro said.

The other scheduled briefings at the AFRC are Feb. 12 and 27; March 11 and 26; April 8 and 23; May 12 and 28 and June 10 and 25. All briefings will run from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Spouses need to call the AFRC at 982-2695 to register.

More information including eligibility determination, career and education counseling, and skills assessment is available online at www.MilSpouse.org.

(Article courtesy of the Department of Labor and the 62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office.)



AROUND THE WORLD



IRAQ - Senior Airman Chris Aversa, left, 7th Airlift Squadron, helps load a truck during a recent deployment.



AFGHANISTAN - 1st Lt. Garrett Danker, 7th AS, operates a computer during a combat airdrop mission on a recent deployment.



Military Financial Education Program helps Airmen make sound decisions

By
Steven Donald Smith
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON- A general lack of financial knowledge makes servicemembers an ideal target for predatory money lenders, so the Defense Department is helping to do something about it, officials said recently.

“Equipping servicemembers with the tools and resources they need to make sound financial decisions is integral to both military readiness and the strength and stability of our servicemembers and their families,” said David Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

To meet these ends, the Defense Department has partnered with the National Association of Securities Dealers Investor Education Foundation to launch the Military Financial Education Program. The NASD Foundation was started in 2003, and is part of the Defense Department’s financial readiness campaign. NASD is the largest private-sector provider of financial regulatory services.

“We know from research we’ve conducted that a high percentage of servicemen and women lack basic financial knowledge,” Robert Glauber, chairman and chief executive officer of NASD, said. “We are here to unveil an important new program that will help members of the armed services and their families manage their money,

and save and invest it wisely.”

Unscrupulous financial institutions often use deceptive tactics such as hidden fees and exorbitant interest rates to take advantage of unsuspecting investors, officials said.

“Military families on or near base are a captive audience for everyone from used car salesmen to payday lenders,” said Mary Schapiro, vice chairman of NASD.

The education program will teach basic investment necessities such as how to buy a car, saving for retirement, and the tradeoffs between risk and return on investment, Glauber said.

The genesis of the program came when First Command Financial Planning, a Texas-based financial lending company, was fined \$12 million for making misleading statements while selling investment plans to military families.

About \$4.5 million of the fine money was returned to investors, while the rest of the money was set aside for the Military Financial Education Program, Glauber said.

The program will not use any taxpayer money.

“This initiative started with our disciplinary action against First Command Financial Planning. We and our partners want to make sure that that sort of thing never happens again,” Schapiro said. “We believe the Military Financial Education Program will move us a long way toward that end.”

The multifaceted program includes:


- An online resource center that will serve as a centralized, trusted source for unbiased infor-

mation on saving and investing, including original content, interactive tools, links to financial education resources;

- On-the-ground training to support the military’s current Personal Financial Management Program by establishing a coordinated and uniform financial education program, including the training and continued certification of personal financial managers and other volunteers;
- Educational tool kits for trainers and investors offering multiple levels of personal financial information;
- On-base activities and events to motivate families to take responsibility for their financial well-being; and
- A long-term public outreach campaign, including print, radio and television public service announcements and media outreach to raise awareness of the tools, information and services available to military people and their families.

The program’s Web site, SaveAndInvest.org, has a plethora of investor information and links to the NASD Web site, where further financial information can be found. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission also has launched an investor information section for military families on its Web site.

Chu expressed high hopes for the program. “It is our hope that with programs like this, that in the future our military personnel will be as well known for their financial savvy as they’re known today for their military prowess,” he said.



0-0-1-3


The medical standard is one drink for women or two drinks for men if a daily drinker.

For periodic drinking, the standard is to keep the blood alcohol level or blood alcohol content under 0.05.

Use personal risk management
Use situational awareness
Use your wingman
Use a friend

0 Drinks under age 21
0 DUI's
Max 1 drink per hour
Max 3 drinks in one night

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE



Crackdown on illegal entry

New Homeland Security procedures for border crossing take effect Jan. 31

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is reminding travelers that beginning Jan. 31, border crossers will be asked to present documents denoting citizenship and identity when entering the United States through land and sea ports of entry. This change primarily affects United States and Canadian citizens who have previously been permitted entry by oral declaration alone, and marks the transition toward standard and consistent documents for all travelers entering the country. It is also the start of a more robust and concerted public education campaign, intended to inform travelers of document requirements which will be implemented next year.

“For the safety of the American people, the United States cannot have an honor system at the border,” said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. “Requiring secure and reliable documentation at our borders will drastically reduce security vulnerabilities posed by permitting entry based on oral declarations alone. As travelers become accustomed to carrying documents to cross the border, and as we move to more stringent documentation requirements, our border officers will be able to more quickly and confidently identify cross-border travelers.”

Beginning Jan. 31, U.S. and Canadian citizens ages 19 and older should no longer expect that an oral declaration alone will be sufficient to prove identity and citizenship for entry into the country. Instead, travelers will be asked to present documentation from a specified list of acceptable documents when entering the U.S. at land and sea ports of entry. Examples include birth certificates

and driver’s licenses. A complete list of acceptable documents is available to travelers at ports of entry and is also available at www.cbp.gov. Travelers who do not present one of these documents may be delayed while U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers attempt to verify their identity and citizenship. Children ages 18 and younger will only need to present a birth certificate.

In order to further secure the U.S. borders against illegal entry, customs officers will no longer be able to admit travelers based on nothing more than a person’s oral assertion of citizenship. During October to December 2007 alone, customs officers reported 1,517 cases of individuals falsely claiming to be U.S. citizens. Last month, customs officials determined that an individual falsely claiming to be a U.S. citizen was wanted for homicide in California. This individual was paroled for entry into the U.S. and transported into the custody of the San Diego Sheriff’s Department. Separately, multiple Government Accountability Office and Inspector General reports have highlighted weaknesses associated with oral declarations and substandard documentation.

Standard and consistent documentation is critical for border officials to accurately determine admissibility into the United States. The Jan. 31 change is a step forward from the largely subjective standard that allowed travelers to present an almost limitless array of documents, such as baptismal certificates, to satisfy customs officers of their citizenship. This change will allow frontline officers to standardize inspections against a nar-

rower class of documents, and customs has protocols in place to verify the authenticity of suspicious driver licenses and guard against the use of counterfeit or altered licenses.

DHS has maintained a consistent public awareness and information campaign to ensure that the traveling public is aware of the new travel documentation requirements under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The transition beginning Jan. 31 will allow travelers to become accustomed to the need to present appropriate documents. Travelers who apply for a passport card, passport, Trusted Traveler Program cards or other secure documentation denoting both citizenship and identity in response to the Jan. 31 change will not need to take additional steps to meet the final WHTI requirements upon full implementation in June 2009.

U.S. citizens may begin applying in advance for the new U.S. Passport Card on Feb. 1, in anticipation of land border travel document requirements. The U.S. Department of State expects that cards will be available and mailed to applicants in the spring.

Although DHS was on schedule to begin implementation of the new requirements as early as summer 2008, the fiscal year 2008 Appropriations Bill passed by Congress last month restricts the department from implementing these new requirements until June 2009.

For more information, visit www.dhs.gov or www.travel.state.gov.
(Article courtesy of the Department of Homeland Security.)

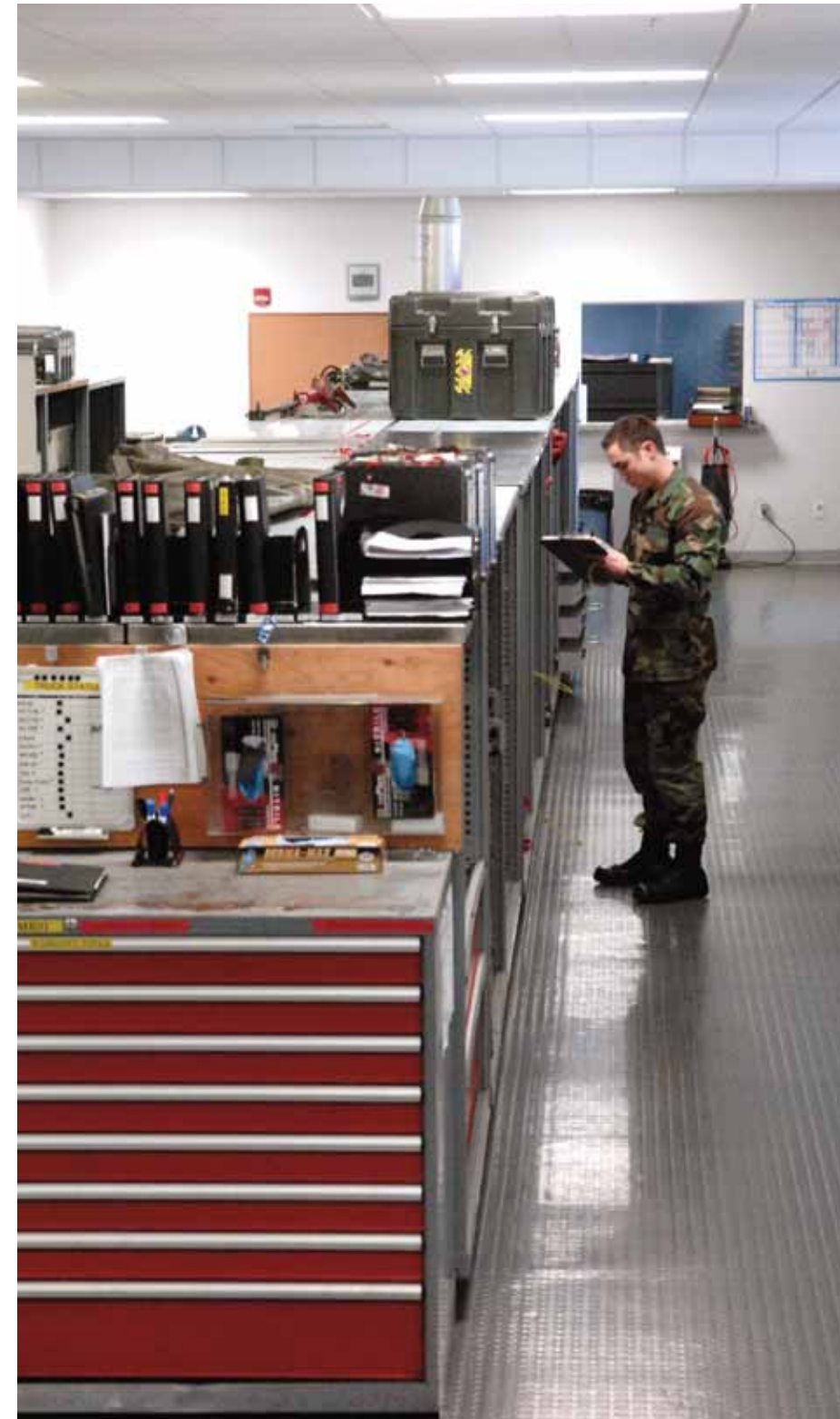




Staff Sergeant Eric Krauter (standing) and Senior Airman Shaun Leahy, both 62nd Maintenance Squadron, ensure tough books, wireless laptops containing the Air Force's technical manuals, are current and up to date prior to being issued to aircraft maintenance personnel.



Airman Leahy checks out a tool by scanning the assigned barcode while working the front counter of the consolidated tool kit section.



Airman Leahy takes inventory of recently returned items in the section's warehouse.

62nd MXS CTK

Everything has its place

by Tyler Hemstreet
STAFF WRITER

Although it may be hard for some to believe, a single missing wrench has the ability to ground an entire C-17 Globemaster III.

If a tool gets wedged in a specific location in the aircraft or prevents certain parts from doing their jobs, it can cause an aircraft to crash, said consolidated tool kit section chief Kent Henderson, 62nd Maintenance Squadron.

And that's exactly why every person in the 62nd MXS' CTK section works hard to account for each and every tool and piece of equipment it checks out.

"Our number one priority is tool accountability," Mr. Henderson said.

The section's main job is to provide aircraft maintainers with any tools, computers, lubes or support equipment they need to accomplish their job while the aircraft undergoes its home station check.

That also includes disposing of any hazardous materials the maintainers produce.

The shop — which operates five days a week,

24 hours each day — functions under a meticulous system of checks and balances between Airmen in the shop and the maintainers who check out tools and equipment.

"Even rubber gloves and shop rags are considered missing tools if they don't come back," Mr. Henderson said. "Everything is accounted for."

Each tool and piece of equipment the shop checks out has a base-specific identifying code etched into it. The code helps the Airmen in the shop track the object's location and make sure it is returned to the shop and not left on the aircraft or in the hangar.

"If a tool is lost, nobody can go home until we find the part," he said.

While each tool gets put back into a specific toolbox in a numbered drawer which contains shape-fitting cutouts in foam, the entire process still requires careful attention, said Senior Airman Margaret Rasmussen, 62nd MXS.

"I like to touch everything in the drawer, so I know I didn't miss it," Airman Rasmussen said.

"That way it's harder to just let your eyes graze over everything. You just have to take your time and make sure it's done right."

The shop performs a tool inventory every shift, Mr. Henderson said.

In addition to storing tools, the shop also stores various maintenance and product safety manuals. And if Airmen need a certain bolt, nut or gasket, they can access the shop's C-17 bench stock to replace the part.

The key to everything is organization, Airman Rasmussen said.

"Our system is set up so you can't really lose anything in here — you just put it where it goes," she said. "You know exactly where everything is going and you can look it up in the computer to see if it's checked out."

Some of the shop's meticulous arrangement of items has even overlapped into Airman Rasmussen's life at home.

"My husband's garage is quite clean," she said with a laugh.



Senior Airman Charles Coppock, left, 62nd Maintenance Squadron, reviews prior entries to a log to ensure all items are accounted for prior to checking out a toolkit from the CTK section.



Airmen in the CTK section use the Tool Accountability System program to maintain and manage the shop's inventory of aircraft support equipment and hardware.

Winter sports opportunities for families abundant in B.C.

By
A. Michael Kundu
 For The Northwest Airlifter

With winter flakes covering granite peaks around the west coast, military families are eagerly searching for quick, affordable mountain getaways for skiing and snow play. Despite the rise in the Canadian dollar (currently, \$1.02 U.S. = \$1 Canadian) some of the finest family retreats available to Northwest bases lie less than five hours away, in British Columbia’s Okanagan Valley, near the town of Kelowna.

And those who have found these resorts often guard them like family secrets.

“In the Rockies, resorts like Big White and Silver Star are getting more attention,” says Steven Threndyle, media relations manager for Big White. “Mountain conditions are incredible, and the packages available make them perfect destinations for families on a budget.”

Featuring the dry, ‘champagne powder’ of the Rocky’s Monashee Mountain range, the annual snowfall in this part of Okanagan averages up to 24 feet of the lightest, flakiest snow you might ever encounter. Military families can experience unparalleled skiing over panoramic vistas, sledding, tubing and snow-shoeing (in powder-dry snow that won’t soak through parkas or create soggy mittens). Evenings provide opportunities to bond around a warm fire, enjoy horse-drawn sleigh rides or stroll the snow-covered streets of a perpetual Christmas village.

“I was surprised at the amenities and great package prices at these resorts,” said retired Sergeant Eric Rindy from Elgin Air Force Base in Florida, on his family’s second trip to the Kelowna region. “You can bring your entire family here and find everything you need, without ever leaving!”

Touted as Canada’s largest ski-in/ski-out

village, Kelowna’s Big White offers various accommodations, from budget suites to luxury hotels. The resort features five powder-filled back bowls for more advanced skiers, and a new six-person lift called the Snow Ghost Express, minimizes lift lines and maximizes the time available for quality skiing and snowboarding. The resort’s Telus terrain park, frequently filled with budding ski and board acrobats, has received numerous awards, and has been recognized as one of the top terrain parks in western Canada.

Nearby Silver Star Resort, whose vast cross-country ski trail network is considered the continent’s top destination by the U.S. national ski team, boasts a Victorian style village with accommodation to suite every budget. Also near Kelowna, Sun Peaks Resort offers the longest vertical ski drop in British Columbia, while Apex features a resort that faces three directions, so warm sunlight is almost always found on one face of the mountain.

Targeted toward vacationing families, resorts like Big White and Silver Star offer daily ski and snowboarding schools for children as young as three years old. On-site snow tubing and sledding areas are supplemented by other non-skier activities, such as sleigh rides, skating, snow shoeing and ample shopping in boutiques and specialty shops. Most of the kid-friendly amenities at Big White, including their award-winning Kid’s Center, are reached by a quick gondola ride at the base of the village – close to the tubing and ice skating areas.

Full families can find something to do at these resorts and as a testimony to one resort’s efforts to deliver unique family experiences, Silver Star Resort offers a special dinner tour where families experience a moonlit ride in a 12-passenger snowcat to a rustic mountaintop cabin, where a professionally-prepared

See **SKIING**, Page 11



Photo courtesy Adventures Unlimited

Adventures Unlimited regularly takes skiers and snowboarders to the local-area slopes aboard their bus. Customers can buy discount ski lift tickets and rent equipment through Adventures Unlimited before they head out.



Photos courtesy Adventures Unlimited



Snow sport enthusiasts also can book weekend ski trips throughout the season with Adventures Unlimited, such as trips to Utah, Oregon and Canada.

B.C. ski resort information

Big White Resort

(250) 765-3101
www.bigwhite.com
5315 Big White Road,
Kelowna, BC Canada V1P 1P3

Sample activities available: Private lessons, kids ski and snowboarding school, cross country trails, terrain park, Happy Valley Inner Tubes (snow tubing), snow-mobiles for kids, snowmobiles tours, skating, snow shoeing, day spa, dogsled tours, ‘snow limo’ tours and horse-drawn sleigh tours.
Shopping: specialty shops
Dining: family priced to gourmet.
*No specific military discount; call resort for special offers.

Silver Star Resort

(250) 542-0224
www.skisilverstar.com
123 Shortt Street,
Silver Star Mountain, BC Canada V1B 3M1

Sample activities available: Private lessons, kids ski and snowboarding school, cross country trails, terrain park, Tube Town Adventure Park (snow tubing), skating on Brewers Pond, Mini-Z snowmobiles for kids, snow-mobiles tours, horse-drawn sleigh tours, snow shoeing, snowcat dinner tours, on-site day spa, snowmobile safaris and a fitness center.
Shopping: specialty shops
Dining: family priced to gourmet.
*No U.S. military discount on individual lift tickets offered.

Sun Peaks Resort

(250) 578-5474
www.sunpeaksresort.com
1280 Alpine Road,
Sun Peaks, BC, Canada V0E 5N0

Sample activities available: Private lessons, kids ski and snowboarding school, childcare, backcountry cat-skiing, cat-track groomer rides, cross country trails, terrain park, Tube Time snow tubing, bungee-trampoline, ice skating, dog-sledding tours, sports center with pool, snowmobiles tours, horse-drawn sleigh tours, snowshoeing, ‘torchlight skiing’ and an on-site day spa.
Shopping: specialty shops
Dining: family priced to gourmet.
*No U.S. military discount on individual lift tickets offered.

Apex Resort

(250) 292-8222
www.apexresort.com
1000 Stray Horse Road,
Penticton BC Canada V2A 6J9

Sample activities available: Private lessons, Tim Horton’s Tube Park (snow tubing), snowmobiles tours, ice-climbing tower, terrain park, show shoeing, ice skating, cross country skiing, ice hockey rink, on-site spa, kids ski and snowboarding school and daycare for young children.
Shopping: specialty shops
Dining: family priced to gourmet.
*No U.S. military discount on individual lift tickets offered.

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gourmet meal awaits.

Regular visitors quickly become familiar with the iconic snow trolls that appear each winter on the high alpine slopes. Jovially referred

to as ‘snow ghosts’, the upper slopes at Big White and Silver Star feature snow-shrouded fir trees, bent over under the accumulated weight of Kelowna’s finest powder. Appearing almost alive, these mountain trolls stand sentry over

scenic vistas that span across the Monashee Mountains.

“You stand up above the clouds, looking down at snow-covered meadows filled with snow ghosts..., you almost don’t want to ski down, you’re just so hyped up by the

beauty,” said Rindy’s stepson Cody.

For more information about ski destinations, discounted tours and Northwest ski resorts available to military families, contact Adventures Unlimited at 982-2206.



Leaders announce policy changes for Airmen in AOR

Areas affected include promotion, physical fitness testing, assignment considerations

By
Staff Sgt. Monique Randolph
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — Changes are on the horizon for Airmen serving in the Central Command area of responsibility. In an effort to standardize policies among those assigned and those deployed to the CENTCOM AOR, Air Force officials will implement several changes beginning as soon as February 2008.

“There are several reasons for these changes,” said Lt. Col. Scott Brady, chief of Air Force promotions and evaluations policy at the Pentagon. “We have Airmen on 365-day deployments and Airmen who are permanent party sitting side by side, for the same amount of time, but some policies affect them differently. So, in those policy areas where it made sense to make a change, and where we could make a change, we did.”

The first major change is that enlisted Airmen will no longer test for promotion in the AOR. Currently, permanent party Airmen, those who are in permanent-change-of-station status, test for promotion while those Airmen on 365-day deployments do not.

Once implemented, the policy change will cease all Weighted Airman Promotion System testing in the AOR regardless of duty status.

“(Testing Airmen in the AOR) reduces mission focus and increases our footprint because it requires secure testing facilities, test proctors and test control officers,” Colonel Brady said. “We also had to consider that many Airmen have to travel to the test site, putting more Airmen on the road and in harm’s way.”

Instead, eligible Airmen will test before deploying if the testing cycle is ongoing, and if they are deployed during the testing cycle, they will have 60 days to study upon their return to home station. If selected for promotion, they will receive back-pay and benefits based on their original date of rank, Colonel Brady said.

Skills Knowledge test exemption policies will remain the same, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis, he said.

Airmen on 365-day deployments in the AOR can also expect changes to physical fitness testing policies. Fitness testing has been prohibited for these Airmen while those permanently assigned are required to test if it is “safe and reasonable” to do so, said Colonel Brady.

“We are going to remove that testing limitation for 365-day deployers, and leave the decision to the commanders on the ground,” said Colonel Brady. “If it is safe and reasonable (to test), the commander can direct the fitness test.”

The final policy change includes not only Airmen on 365-day deployments, but those who are extended to 300 or more days after they’ve deployed.

“Currently, Airmen who deploy on an approved 365-day indeterminate temporary duty assignment can apply for advance assignment consideration or a 24-month assignment deferment, but Airmen who are extended to 365 days can not,” Colonel Brady said. “To make this policy more equitable, we’re applying those benefits to Airmen who are extended to 300 days or more.”

Airmen who wish to apply for an advanced assignment or deferment will do so through their home station unit commanders upon returning from deployment.

“The desires of the Airman will be heavily considered, but they must apply; the program is not automatic. Also, unit manning and the needs of the Air Force will still be deciding factors,” said Colonel Brady.



New Airmen ‘Do Something Amazing’ in snow

By

Lt. Col. Douglas Stropes

342nd Recruiting Squadron commander

SHAKOPEE, Minn. — Thirty-four new Airmen joined the Air Force recently at a World PowerSport Association Snowmobile Tour event in Shakopee, Minn.

More than 25,000 fans at the Air Force Canterbury SnoCross event witnessed the young adults take the Air Force oath of enlistment for the first time, led by Brig. Gen. Suzanne Vautrinot, Air Force Recruiting Service commander and grand marshal for the event.

Throughout the day, event directors, team owners, athletes and spectators treated the Air Force’s newest recruits as heroes by giving high-fives, tours of the pit area, and the chance to test out the latest snowmobile technology on a fabricated track. The recruits later shared refreshments with General Vautrinot and asked her questions about the Air Force.

Shakopee was the second leg of an eight-stop snowmobile tour with the Air Force sponsoring the Scheuring racing team and its two drivers, as well as carrying the role of title sponsor for this stop of the tour.

SnoCross is a popular form of snowmobile racing featuring a short-track with tight turns, banked corners and a variety of bumps on which racers catch “big air” in full view of spectators.

Many Air Force recruiters were on hand throughout the day to share information about Air Force opportunities with race fans.

High-energy events, such as SnoCross, Monster Jam and NASCAR races, provide the Air Force a venue to talk up Air Force careers with patriotic men and women looking for high-tech jobs, seeking adventure and wanting to do something more with their lives.

General Vautrinot thanked the local community, event organizers and race team members for their support of the military. She saved her final praise for the Delayed Entry Program members for making the decision to “Do Something Amazing” by joining the Air Force.

The next stop for the new recruits is basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Once there, they begin their transformation into trained Airmen. They’ll continue the evolution toward becoming Airman Warriors upon completion of technical training — where they will serve in a number of Air Force career specialties, such as linguists, security forces, survival instructors and loadmasters, to name a few.



Thirty-four Air Force Delayed Enlistment Program members watch as the Air Force Honor Guard posts the colors at a SnoCross event in Shakopee, Minn. During a break in the action later, the 34 young men and women took the oath of enlistment in front of a crowd of more than 25,000 spectators.



WADS Annual Awards

Forty-three nominees were recognized for outstanding performance for the year 2007 at the Western Air Defense Sector’s Annual Awards Banquet on Jan. 11. The award winners of 2007 included **Senior Airman Edwin Aviles**, Active Guard Reserve Airman; **Staff Sgt. Mary Maggiolino**, AGR non commissioned officer; **Master Sgt. Scott Taylor**, AGR Senior NCO; **Staff Sgt. Ericson Cereno**, Category 1 Drill Status Guardsman Enlisted; **Tech. Sgt. Malinda Gonnuscio**, Category 2 Enlisted and Trainer of the Year; **Capt. Catherine Graham**, Company Grade Officer; **Ms. Phyllis Motteler**, Category 1 Civilian; and **Mr. Nolan Rayne**, Category 2 Civilian. Additionally, Captain Graham received an award for her superior performance and was recognized as 1st Air Force’s Company Grade Officer of the Year. Sergeant Maggiolino won a state-level award for Non Commissioned Officer of the year. Active Guard Reserve and refers to full-time unit members. Drill Status Guards-men and normally drill one weekend a month and two weeks out of the year while holding civilian jobs in their communities.

Chiefs’ Group induction

The 62nd and 446th Airlift Wings’ Chiefs’ Groups will host their induction ceremony at 7 p.m. Feb. 8 at the McChord Clubs and Community Center. For more information call, Chief Master Sgt. Dan Morris at 982-3210.

Scholarship opportunity

The Pacific Northwest Airlift/Tanker Association is pleased to announce its 2nd Annual Scholarship. A scholarship in the amount of \$400 will be awarded to a deserving applicant who is currently enrolled or in the process of applying to a higher education program. Applicants should complete an application form and essay no later than Feb. 29. For an application, please e-mail Capt. Gabe Arrington at *Gabe.Arrington@McChord.af.mil* or Staff Sgt. Scott Templin

at *Scott.Templin-02@McChord.af.mil*.

Lost and found

The 62nd Security Forces Squadron is currently in possession of numerous items of personal property such as bicycles, keys, etc. These items were found on or near McChord and may be reclaimed by contacting the Security Forces Investigation Section, located in Bldg. 160. For more information, call the Investigations Section at 982-5936.

Physician's assistant training

Applications for physician’s assistant training classes beginning in January, April and August will be accepted no later than Jan. 25. See Education and Training course announcement catalog J9OQA42G1-01AA, physician assistant (Phase I), for course description, prerequisites, and application procedure. The selection board is scheduled to convene on March 19. For more information call Mr. Bruce Houseman at 982-3149.

Air Force Aid Society

Concerned about the soaring cost of higher education for your children? Maybe the Air Force Aid Society can help. The Society’s General Henry H Arnold Education Grant Program awards \$2000 grants to sons and daughters of active duty, Title 10 AGR/Reservists on extended active duty, Title 32 AGR performing full-time active duty, retired, retired Reservists with 20 plus qualifying years of service, and deceased Air Force members. Also eligible are spouses (residing stateside) of active duty and Title 10 AGR/Reservists on extended active duty and surviving spouses of deceased members. Don't think you won't qualify. Last year, 75 percent of the McChord certified entries received the \$2000 award. Call your AFAS section at the Airman & Family Readiness Center today at 982-2695 for more information and an application, or visit the Air Force Aid Society’s web site at *www.afas.org*.



Faith and Worship Programs

*For more information,
call the chapel support center at 982-5556.*

The following chapel program takes place at the base chapel support center, Bldg. 746, unless otherwise noted:

Adult Bible study is from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

Schedule of worship services

- Catholic Services:**
All Catholic services are in chapel two.
Saturday: 4 p.m. Confession
5 p.m. Mass
Sunday: 9:30 a.m. Mass
11 a.m. Mass
- Protestant Services:**
Sunday: 8:30 a.m. Liturgical worship: Chapel one
9:45 a.m. Sunday school for all ages at the chapel support center
11 a.m. Traditional worship: Chapel one
11 a.m. Contemporary service: Chapel support center
- Jewish Services:**
Friday: 6 p.m. Fort Lewis chapel every 1st, 3rd and 5th at the corner of 12th Street and Liggett Avenue 967-6590
- Orthodox Activities:**
Sunday: 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy, St. Nicholas Church, 15th Street and Yakima Avenue, Tacoma
- Other services:**
Orthodox Christian Community, Cascade Chapel, Fort Lewis
Sundays: 8:45 a.m. Pre-Communion prayers
9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy
Confession is by appointment only. Call Father John Anderson at 967-1717 or 906-6843 or e-mail *father.anderson@us.army.mil*.

